BOOK REVIEWS

1. Flora of Thailand Edited by Tem Smitinand and Kai Larsen. Applied Scientific Research Corporation of Thailand, Bangkok. 1970–. Issued to date: Vol. 2, part 1 (Haloragaceae, Rhizophoraceae, Oxalidaceae, Ochnaceae, Rosaceae, Icacinaceae), price 40 Bt.; Vol. 2, part 2 (Cardiopteridaceae, Dilleniaceae, Saurauiaceae, Schisandraceae, Illiciaceae, Connaraceae, Apostasiaceae, Actinidiaceae, Theaceae, Bonnetiaceae, Centrolepidaceae, Flagellariaceae, Hanguanaceae, Juncaceae, Lowiaceae, Restionaceae, Triuridaceae, Balanophoraceae, Rafflesiaceae, Cycadaceae, Pinaceae, Cephalotaxaceae, Cupressaceae), price 50 Bt., 1972; Vol. 2, part 3 (Podocarpaceae, Gnetaceae, Smilacaceae, Magnoliaceae, Portulacaceae, Stylidiaceae, Goodeniaceae, Sphenocleaceae), Price 120 Bt., 1975.

The three parts of Volume 2 are all so far published in the series and together they make up 280 pages. Within them may be found taxonomic treatments of 37 families of Seed Plants, including 6 families of Gymnosperms (presumably completing this group for Thailand), 9 families of Monocotyledonae, and 22 families of Dicotyledonae. The families are published in order of completion and are in no systematic or other special sequence. However there is an overall format, carefully implemented, that gives uniformity in the appearance of the contributions. Each family treatment has been prepared by one of the many authors contributing to this Flora, and includes a brief family description, key(s) to genera, enumerated sequence of genera, each genus with a bibliographic and descriptive paragraph, then with keys to species, and finally the (numbered) species with bibliographic and descriptive paragraphs, distribution both in Thailand and in the world, brief notes on ecology, basic habitat, altitudes, phenology, then Thai vernacular names, and finally uses. Synonymy is included, and in several cases illustrations, mostly line-drawings but also a few photographs, are provided. The Parts are paper bound and are printed on reasonably good quality matt somewhat heavy paper. All are in English. Thai vernacular names are also printed in Thai characters.

There are few inconsistencies, but some comments are in order. In several families (Rafflesiaceae, Portulacaceae, Cupressaceae, Icacinaceae) there are no illustrations at all; on the whole it would appear better to have

on principle at least one illustration for each family to show either one characteristic species or, in a single plate, floral or other useful features of the family. Where line drawings appear they are helpful; as these often appear to have been 'borrowed' from standard sources there is some variation in quality however. The photographs are sometimes less effective (e.g. that of *Dillenia aurea*, fig. 4 in 2(2): 99).

Issuing Floras in parts has become a prevalent method, allowing 'large' projects to communicate results as they become available. Such a plan puts families together in a rather random manner and this has some disadvantages but on the whole they are outweighed by the advantages. The "*Flora Malesiana*" has successfully followed the same method and this is now in practice in the "*Tree Flora of Malaya*" and other works. The multiple author system is also well known by now; its advantages are also an increase in completion rate but as a result there may be inconsistencies in approach and quality of treatment. It is interesting to contrast the very short descriptions provided by some contributors (as for example in Connaraceae) and the rather lengthy ones (as in Smilacaceae). Only practical use of the work could determine whether these descriptions are of different lengths for definite reasons.

Most of the families published to date are comparatively smaller ones, some only represented in Thailand by a single species. Others (Rosaceae, Icacinaceae) are of moderate size. Again the approach is logical, tackling the lesser before the greater chores. (This is not to say that some of the smaller families are not taxonomically difficult). Previous treatments (as in "*Flora Malesiana*") and recent revisions (as that of Hansen for Balanophoraceae) have been made use of, another tested and beneficial approach. While the *Flora of Thailand* can rely on work being done in the Flora Malesiana region, there is also a certain backing of information available in other forms (e.g. Airy Shaw's recent catalogue of Thai Euphorbiaceae) which can form the basis of a floristic account. But, like the "*Flora Malesiana*" itself, momentum must be maintained and if possible increased, since the bigger, more difficult families will tend to be left for later study.

The contributors include several well-known botanists such as J. Vidal, K. larsen, T. Smitinand, Ding Hou, R.D. Hoogland, T. Koyama, H. Keng,

and others; representing several countries and institutions to back up the local staff such as C. Phengklai. The quality of the work in general seems competent, though only practical use of the flora in actual identification could provide a real guide. At any rate it is good to see the results of international cooperation embodied in this work. It will be up to the Editorial Board to maintain the rate of progress and to continue to oversee the quality of the work. It is sincerely to be hoped that further parts of the Flora will be issued at fairly short intervals. As Part 3 is dated 1975 it is about time for another part to appear soon. The price is (so far) quite modest. On the whole this is a project well carried out so far, but it is important to (1) include more illustrations, (2) keep up the pace of publication, and (3) begin to tackle some of the bigger, more significant families.

Potential users of this Flora include not only those in Thailand or those interested in Thai plants, but persons in adjacent regions, particularly Malaysia, Burma, Assam, and Indo-China, to whom the Flora will complement the "*Flore Générale de l' Indo-Chine*" (which is now gradually being replaced by the "*Flore du Vietnam, Cambodge, et Laos*"). The Thai Government and the Editors of the Flora are to be commended for a very worthwhile project.

Benjamin C. Stone
University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2. Flore du Cambodge, du Laos et du Viet-Nam. Edited by A. Aubreville and J.-F. Leroy. Paul de Chevalier, Paris. 1975. No. 15. Cucurbitacées by K. Kerauden-Aymonin). Pp. 123, 16 plts.

Dealing with 22 genera comprising 47 species, identification keys to genera and species are provided. Two new combinations are proposed: *Zehneria indica* (Lour.) Kerauden, based on *Melothria indica* Lour; *Z. marginata* (Bl.) Kerauden, based on *Bryonia marginata* Bl. Many species have their distributional ranges in Thailand. The text is well printed, the illustrations are finely executed.

T. Smitinand
Royal Forest Department, Bangkok.